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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/596,358

09/14/2006

Takahiro Ohashi

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Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP
P.O. Box 55874
Boston, MA 02205

EXAMINER

ROWLAND, STEVE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3718

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/15/2011

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/596,358	Applicant(s) OHASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner STEVE ROWLAND	Art Unit 3718	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 November 2011.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on ____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
- 4) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 5a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 9) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 10) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This action is responsive to Applicant's communication filed on 11/07/2011.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. **Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.**

Regarding claims 1 and 5, the recited "game ongoing" lacks antecedent basis.

Claims 2-4 are rejected for incorporating this error from claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. **Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nguyen et al (US 2005/0043089 A1) (hereinafter "Nguyen").**

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Regarding claim 5, Nguyen teaches a master apparatus as a predetermined reception destination in a card game system comprising a plurality of apparatuses including the master apparatus (¶ [0064]), a master reception device configured to receive the game information transmitted from each of the plurality of game apparatuses (¶ [0121]: *gaming unit reports scores to tournament server*), a start determination device configured to determine whether to start a specific time during the game ongoing (360: *server creates admission ticket containing player information and start/stop time*), a permission device configured to make the master reception device reject reception of the game information at the master reception device until the start determination device determines to start a specific time (370: *server receives admission request from player*), and configured to transmit the time information to the plurality of game apparatuses including the master apparatus (¶ [0108]: *tournament server enables gaming unit once designated time slot arrives*) and permit the master reception device to receive the game information from a card used by a when the start determination device determines to start the specific time during the game ongoing (374: *allow player to play games*), a device configured to execute game progress processes based on the game information received during the specific time during the game ongoing from the game apparatuses including the master apparatus so that the game information affects a result of the game ongoing (¶ [0089]: *player plays games and accumulates a score with tournament server*) and a rejection device configured to make the master reception device reject the reception again when the elapse time determination device determines that the set time elapses (¶ [0109]: *tournament server may disable gaming unit at end of predetermined time period*).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 1-3 are rejected 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nguyen et al (US 2005/0043089 A1) (hereinafter “Nguyen”) in view of Blatter et al (US 2005/0192089 A1) (hereinafter “Blatter”).

Regarding claim 1, Nguyen teaches a card game system (Abstract), comprising a plurality of game apparatuses, each of which functions as either a master apparatus configured to control a game (¶ [0064]: *tournament server*) or a terminal apparatus configured to perform a process accordance with indications from the master apparatus (¶ [0064]: *gaming units*), the plurality of game apparatus being connected to each other so as to transmit and receive data to and from each other (Fig. 1), wherein when one of the plurality of game apparatuses is set as the master apparatus, the game apparatuses other than the game apparatus set as the master apparatus are

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set to the terminal apparatuses (§ [0064]: *the tournament server may be implemented by one of the gaming units*), the game apparatus set as the master apparatus has a master reception device configured to receive the game information transmitted from each of the plurality of game apparatus (§ [0121]: *gaming unit reports scores to tournament server*), a start determination device configured to determine whether to start a specific time during the game ongoing (§ [0108]: *tournament server enables gaming unit once designated time slot arrives*), a permission device configured to make the master reception device reject to receive the game information at the master reception device until the start determination device determines to start the specific time during the game ongoing (370: *server receives admission request from player*), and configured to transmit time information to the plurality of game apparatuses including the game apparatus set as the master apparatus (§ [0108]: *tournament server enables gaming unit once designated time slot arrives*) and permit the master reception device to receive the game information when the start determination device determines to start a specific time during the game ongoing (374: *allow player to play games*), an elapse time determination device configured to determine whether a time set as the specific time in advance elapses after the permission device permits the reception of the game information (§ [0109]: *end of time segment*), a rejection device configured to make the master reception device reject the reception again when the elapse time determination device determines that the set time elapses (§ [0109]: *tournament server may disable gaming unit at end of time slot*), and a device configured to execute game progress processes based on the game information received during the specific time from the game apparatuses including the game apparatus set as the master apparatus so that the game information affects a result of the game ongoing (§ [0089]: *player plays games and accumulates a score with tournament server*), and each of the plurality of game apparatuses has a device configured to, when receiving the timing information, make a player use a card to obtain the game information from the card (§ [0103]: *admission ticket*), and a

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terminal transmission device configured to transmit the game information having been read to the master reception device (24). Nguyen does not specifically disclose wherein each of the plurality of game apparatuses, when receiving time information during the game ongoing, is allowed to read and transmit game information recorded in a card to the game apparatus set as the master apparatus, the game progresses using the read game information. However, Blatter suggests wherein each of the plurality of game apparatuses, when receiving time information during the game ongoing, is allowed to read and transmit game information recorded in a card to the game apparatus set as the master apparatus, the game progresses using the read game information (¶ [0045]: *control codes are read from the card during special mode*). Hence, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Nguyen and Blatter in order to allow for custom functionality of the game terminal during tournament play.

Regarding claim 2, Nguyen teaches wherein the rejection device rejects the reception of the game information further transmitted from the game apparatus that is a sender of the game information already received by the master reception device even before the elapse time determination device determines that the set time elapses (¶ [0109] lines 9-12).

Regarding claim 3, Nguyen teaches wherein the number of the plurality of game apparatuses is two (¶ [0023]: *one or more gaming units*).

10. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nguyen in view of Blatter and Yap et al (US 2002/0020745 A1) (hereinafter “Yap”).

Regarding claim 4, it is noted that neither Nguyen nor Blatter teaches a card which has three or more sides and has the game information printed on a same face along the respective sides. However, Yap teaches a card which has three or more sides and has the game information printed on a same face along the respective sides (Figs. 2-5). Hence, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the

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teachings of Nguyen, Blatter, and Yap in order to allow for the interior of the card to be large enough to house a hard drive, thus increasing the volume and complexity of the information that could be stored.

Response to Arguments

11. Applicant's arguments filed on 11/07/2011 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Nguyen fails to teach “a permission device configured to make the master reception device reject reception of the game information at the master reception device until the start determination device determines to start a specific time.” Examiner respectfully disagrees. During “time slot” mode (as generally detailed in ¶¶ [0098] – [0123]), players are issued an “admission ticket” which allows them to participate in a tournament only during a period which begins and ends at preset times (¶ [0107]: *admission ticket contains identifier indicative of a particular time slot*). Therefore, Examiner respectfully submits that Nguyen discloses this feature.

Applicant's remaining arguments are moot in view of the additional grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

12. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a). A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the

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advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steve Rowland whose telephone number is (571) 270-7844. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday, alternate Fridays, 8:30 am to 6:00 pm, Eastern Time. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor Peter Vo can be reached at (571) 272-4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/S. R./
Examiner, Art Unit 3718

/Peter DungBa Vo/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3718